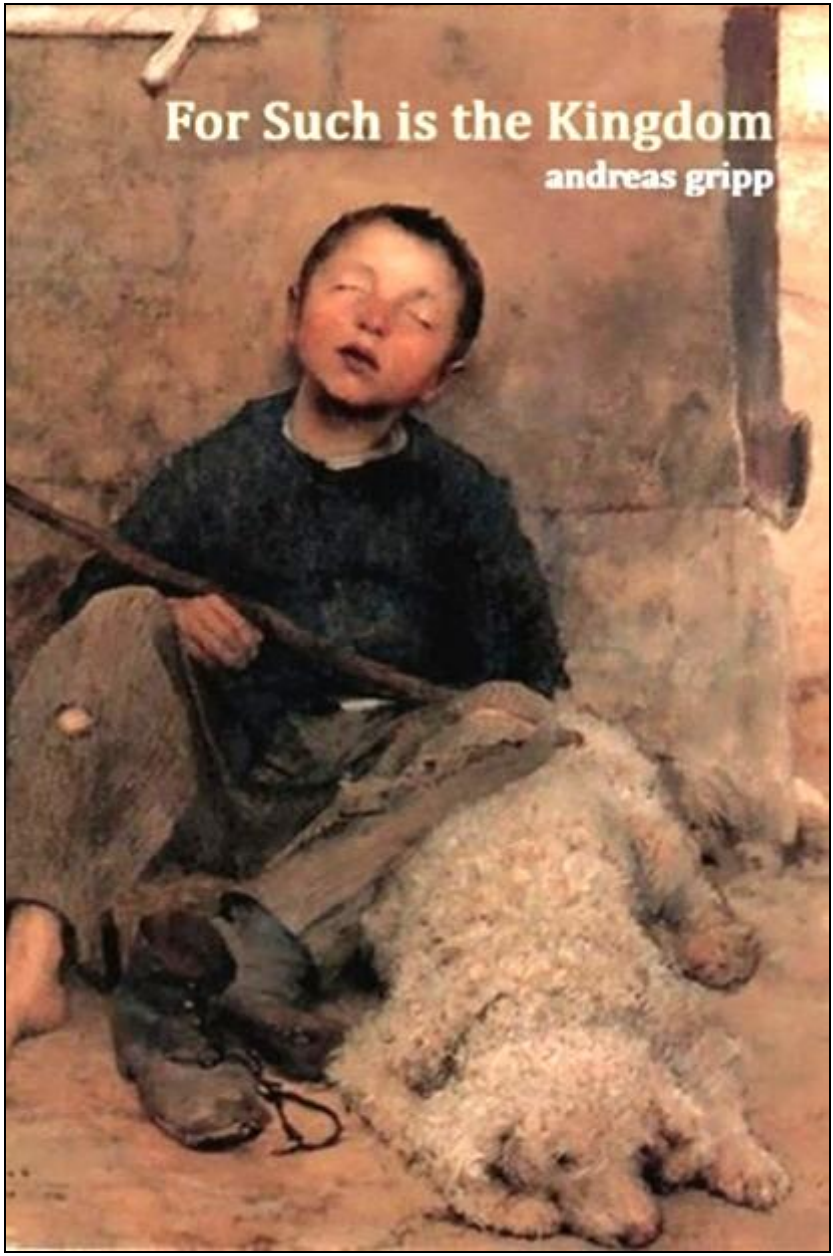
For Such is the Kingdom
andreas gripp

For Such is the Kingdom

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For Such is the Kingdom

Andreas Gripp

Beliveau Books

For Such is the Kingdom
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Email: beliveaubooks@gmail.com
Author Email: andreasgripp@gmail.com
Author Website:
andreasgripp.wixsite.com/andreasgripp

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Edna St. Vincent Millay

L'Artista

Leonardo painted
Leda and the Swan
to shroud a crack
along his wall
that spoke of gin—
and his flailing dance
which lost control.

Michelangelo
sculpted *Bacchus*
to hide a wine
stain on his rug.
He scrubbed to no avail
until the roosters
heralded the day.

And I, I will
write the Great
Canadian Novel,
10,000 pages
long, which should easily
conceal the vodka
I had vowed to never quaff.
A bookcase can be baffling.
Drink makes
fools of us all.

The Arrival of Ennui

Nothing's quite as dull as
watching continental drift.
Its half-an-inch
per solstice.
Helios will burst in
nova before Seattle's
in Japan.

Forget the thirsty walls
imbibing Behr at a slothy
pace. And dismiss
the sprouting grass—
the futility of
its stretch to brush
the sky.

Of course, you could coax
yourself to yawn with
a looking glass, observe your
growth of brows. But I'm unable
to do the nails—nibbled to their
lunula to calm my nerves.
And if you ask me, they're more like
sinking suns than rising moons.

I loathe the smarmy
scientist who says our star is
fucking white. That its gold is solely
firmament's grand illusion. Fantastic.
Every poem on Earth
must now succumb to
alteration. So sit there with your
Shakespeare on the table. Tell Donne
to wait his turn. What else is there
to do? His fingers on the
wood like a galloping
horse. Hemmed in by
the fence your grandpa
made. *It's either that*
or hit the bottle.

Frankly I'd take the
bottle. Soak in
every drop until
my beard has reached the door.
Plenty of time for
the poem that I will shove into
its throat. Cast it in the ocean,
plodding to some shoreline
forever a teensy breath ahead.

After the Applause

We assumed that he was
rude when he never clapped.
Even the maestro
glared his way.
A handshake never proffered.
Flowers never jutting
from his fingers. Fingers
never peeking from his sleeve—
a brood of stunted pupae—
shy kids much too scared
to step on stage.

Some surmised thalidomide.
Or he'd never found the right
prosthetic. Possibly the
left. Even from the start he'd
push the abacus with his nose.
Olly Olly Oxen
never freed. Unable to
tag another. Scribe that
you were loved.
Thumbed the *doorbell*
with his ear. Chimed
your valentine.

You say you saw him naked
by mistake. But nothing's
done in err
when it comes to that—
he wanted you to
see what wasn't lost. To watch
him on the roof. Squawking
he can *fly* without a feather.
Shoulders miming elbows
miming wings. Talons
for his toes. Our dearest
Daedalus. The guise of
Cupid's ghost—

as if we'd somehow catch him
in the fullness
of our arms. As if he
wouldn't sever into
jetsam, adding to the
infinity of his puzzle.
A single piece for
you; two for every
wonder of his world.

Ekphrasis on a Still Life
by Alexander Titorenkov

Everyone assumes the
painting of the cherries
is about the fruit and
not the bowl. Or never concerning
the pit that's ever-lurking—
like a landmine for your throat.

My uncle choked on one.
The stem, that is.
So consumed with
fretting about the middle.
Of the bowl, I mean.
Belonging to my aunt;
the scratch that he inflicted,
for which he blamed the cat.

When *Molly* came back home—
newly declawed—
unable to use her paws to
snag the mice, his remorse
hung in the air just like
a candelabra's sway,

one on which his
daughter knit a noose.
The man from *Delouse the Mouse*
had also peddled
chandeliers.

Maybe Titorenkov
is a light year beyond
the curve. Maybe what is
grand is plainly shrouded,
like a parable
from a viridescent
knoll.

Maybe he's Picasso's
second coming. Dali 2.0
& we've been clueless—
that life is anything *but*
a bowl of cherries;
that he's done wonders
with bananas; grapes
and an apple core;
his every stroke a lesson:

A humdrum, static bounty
is seldom what it seems—

speaks of some
utopic *forfeiture;*
a cherub's searing
blade; our nudity
now impure;

the price of
a reckless bite.

Grave Digger, or
Not Another Ode About the Trees

I've learned I've
pondered the trees
in a fallacious way.
Yes, I'm aware
the poets gorge
on oak & ash.
A sycamore is less.
Their buds outnumber
the sand.

But all this time their
branches have been
roots—roots have been
their scions—
stretching to a
sacrilege of light,

the undertow of earth.
This is why the
moles are nearly blind.
Treasure at the
bottom of abyss.
Squinting's a game
for the quick
& not the dead.

Who decides what's sky?
Behold the flight of worms.

Our grandson
stomps on leaves
to hear the crunching of
their bones. This is something
beauty cannot offer. Supple's
invariably soundless—
which only the deaf can hear.

A surface
yet to wrinkle
hasn't lived. To wither
is to feel the
sigh of God. There
below the stratum.
Every stone a star.

The basis for why
you'll stop at six feet
down.

Why you'll roll
your beloved over
once the mourners
sob & flee. Her dreams had
always burrowed never
soared. Your shovel
like a staff
that splits the sea.

The Blade

Those who take up the sword
shall perish by the sword.
—Matthew 26:52

Sword must be the mightiest
word in the world. See it for
yourself: *word* is already contained,
its double-
daggered w
left unsaid, mistaken
for a pair of muted v—
fleet-footed samurai
set to slice;
on tiptoes like the shrouded
a in stealth.

It's the hero's
weapon of choice—
unsheathed in half-a-second—
the honour that it brings, a rod
for Thorian bolts, epitome
of Herculean effort.

Conan was its servant
not its master. Nothing else
can knight you on the shoulders.
Not an AK-47.
Not the atom bomb.
And surely not a Molotov—
its bearer fleeing the battle
once it's tossed.

It's the poster boy for
knives; something they aspire to
whenever their drawer is pulled.
It will help you in a pinch;
cut that brick of butter
that's been sitting in the
fridge since olden days.
Silverware have winced
from golden auras—a smooth,
deceptive texture;
feigning they're too spotty
to do the trick.

The sword *itself*
can never be surrender's cause.
It knows no cowardice.

When it's thrown onto the
ground in acquiescence,
it repudiates the fingers
which concede, always unforgiving;
vengeful to the bone.
It does more than
simply wound. It severs the
brain from body. The body
from the soul. Takes our proud
identity away.

It's just in its show
of mercy. Merciless
when it's just. It will invade
and/or defend. It even serves to
splice the conjugations.
Unyielding Excalibur.
Few are worthy to wield.

It's our past and it's our
future. Willing to *adapt*
if it must. Alight in the
hands of Kenobi. Aflame
with Joan of Arc.

Forged when war arrives
& it always will.

The sword can take a punch—
pounded on an anvil
in a blaze, till it blinds us
like the sun. Its deafening,
immutable roar, as though a
mother giving birth
in archaic times.

We are all its sons.
We are all its daughters.
It's twin-edged for a reason,
honed in its locution.
Its language is its
glory. It harbours the gift of
tongues. We know exactly
what it says when
it disrobes, recoiling from
its naked retribution.

The Babushka

I bet you *Kratos* couldn't
open this pickle
jar. As if it had been
fastened by cement.
I lament the fact if *I*
can't get to the gherkins,
what's a little old lady
supposed to do?

The bag in the box of Apple Smacks
refuses to be pried. The glue from
a thousand steeds. Considering what
it's doing to my obliques, it's a
GoodLife all its own.
What's a little old lady
supposed to do?

The can opener's called in
sick. Every single canine's
chipped or broke. It's as useful
as Gums McGoo.
I pity all the Dorothys in the world.

They've vacuum sealed the salmon—

like Christ with a Roman guard.
The scissors & the
knives have chickened out—
no one wants a hernia
so who can blame them?
I'll send a morse
to Musée d'Orsay, plead
for a guillotine.
What's a little old lady
supposed to do?

You say I must care madly
for "little old ladies." Envision
their slow starvation although
abutted by a billion jars—
like a shelter
beneath Megiddo, legumes
for the end of the world.

Mavis lives upstairs, and judging
by the rumpus seeping
through the popcorn
ceiling, I think I might have
undershot her might:

shearing off a bottle
with her dentures;
thawing a puck-hard steak
with just the fever
of her breath;

and the Polskie Ogórki?
There's no fortress
Bick's can build
by which to thwart her
voracious hands—biceps like
Ferrigno; abs on which she
does her Tuesday wash;

and nails the shape of
talons—that she'll use
on Yaroslav Grüt—
amid a quarrel on the
way she's shucking maize,
its mess on his rocking
chair;

or during a night of
deviant love,

divulging
through her grunts
what she desires.

The Magus

They say *the hand is*
quicker
than the eye. Everything
is, really. Two turtles
playing catch-up
with a squirrel—seeing its
bounding appendage in
ellipse. If rats had fluffy
tails, we'd all be stuffing
walls with provolone.

I caught your beauty in a
mirror—

my sight
was somewhat slower
than my tongue.
I said I would have
loved you
had my pupils honed in
sooner—some phantom
afternoon in Jacob
Park.

Years are much too long to
house regret. It's why the tortoise
drags its feet. The insufferable
weight of shells—every thought a
ballast. My mother
trudged the school
like Quasimodo. Blame the
burden, not the spine.

Ears will leave our eyes
consuming dust. Your father
watched The Preakness
for the sound. A gallop's
blur of triumph
by a nose.

I've heard a scent
births reminiscence. Swifter
than the spotting of an elm.
One that bears
initials, the scars from a
hurried touch. Behold its
mourning trunk—as the Spring
betrays its sorrow
in the guise of quenching
thirst.

Our shadows only
move beneath the light.
It's said that nothing's
quicker—at three hundred
million meters every second—
half the stars it shows us, passed
away. And what is death—
if not nimble on its feet?
Averse to feel our fury
should we spy our sluggish
faces in its glass.

Pining for St. Patrick on His Day

Maybe I'm making assumptions,
but I'm guessing the folks
at O'Malley's Pub
won't exactly be pondering
the Trinity.

Sure, clovers are a-plenty.
Irish brews are green.
Every drunken lout
has been screeching *Molly Malone.*

If there was ever a *White*
Man's Day then this is it.
Socks up to the knees.
The vacant, bloodshot eyes.
No one in line at the *restroom*
to simply rest.

It really doesn't matter if
the snow won't deliquesce.
If icicles mimic stilettos
over every Kelly's head.

Yet if that had been the
case, in 433 AD,

I'd imagine a
squat St. Paddy
taking a shovel to winter's
end, its final belch of flakes,
hunting for a
shamrock that's been
sober enough to stand.
Or maybe *slouch*
and a little tipsy. The weight of
a three-headed god.
Like Cerberus without the
drool. Never having to fetch
3 sticks at once. Something the
saint could carry in
his palm:

the Father
is the Son is
the Holy Ghost,

stupor on the face of
Danny Boy, who's upchucked
his Kilkenny,

unwilling to give it a
single rumination,
engrossed with having the
time of his wretched life.

Advice from an Older Poet

Never write a poem
when you are hungry.
Much like a *grocery*
run—the bill is
thrice the price
when you are famished.
Your potatoes
a bag of boulders
on your back.

Never paint a landscape
while you're starving.
The willows will be
leafless—not because
it's winter but each green
the look of sage,
and you envision it as
season for your trout—
which will multiply
profusely in your river—
that pretzels through the
canvas peacock blue.
Every fowl's fare
with an empty gut.

You will morph each
stone to bread. Like Jesus
had He yielded to temptation.
And not just *any* loaf will do.
Naan that's soaked in saffron,
from the yawn of our morning
orb. Butter has never been better.

Your snow will salt the meadow,
which has suddenly
teemed with steers.
Acorns change to grapes so
you can wash it down the
gullet with Baco Noir.
Choosers need not be beggars.

Never let a rumble
be your muse.
You'll come up with
half-baked verse, expect three
Michelin stars. Work a horse
into its stanzas
you're so ravenous
you could eat.

Mesopotamia, or Shoeless in the Desert

The most senseless
faux pas
life ever made
was heaving itself to land.
Its sands that bore our
serpents.

Fish are never thirsty.
Fins have never felt
a crucifixion. Or hangnails
lasting weeks. The wrench
of aging backs—while
pulling up their socks.
Each one with its
holes like effervescence.

We were all better off
in the sea.
No partition of the waters.
Clods with a nuclear
code. Everything was sushi.

The octopus? A spider
who changed her mind.

Floating in the deep
as if the heavens; starfish
for its suns. No more sulking
in a corner with its silk.
Twiddling its many thumbs.
Forgetting it could sew itself
some threads; pause its naked
days; like some suddenly
bashful primates—tramping to a
tailor's for a fitting; somewhere
beyond the fruit where rivers kiss.

Greybeard, or The Piggyback

This is what I've noticed
when I drive:
No one's on the street to
thwack a *Dunlop*
with a stick.

Of course, I'm so
antediluvian,
everyone called out *horse*
instead of *car.*

Cried *plague* instead of
cooties.

Ring-around-the-mammoth.

I haven't seen a piggy-
back for nearly
thirty years. A bygone
mode of movement. Kids
now slouch bewitched—
by some Samsung's
gravité.

I don't get *out* much anymore.
Housebound by my hobble.
The rotary's lost its curls.
A luddite stretching cord
as if it's time.

Maybe folks still stop &
stoop, offer one on the roadway
to Nantucket. Maybe the burden
of the weight is just as airy as
those heady days of love,

the strati with their
arms about our shoulders,
clouds that have no
wings and yet they fly.

For Such is the Kingdom

There are only so many
ways you can pen of
innocence. Do it with a quill
and you're precluded.
For who has conferred
the right—to write with another's soul?

How do you know
the gull won't circle
back, scan the grit of sand
for what is theirs?
And why assume a circle?
There are twenty
trillion shapes from which to
choose. Every Magen David—trigons
that wouldn't stay put.

Why do we
bleed *out* and never *in?*
Ink has the viscosity
of life.

I have never seen
the blood of birds.

Maybe it has lingered in Aquila.
Or is the colour of
our air. I was told
that I could spot it if
my orbs & palms were clenched;
focused like The Thinker
of Rodin. He would have
found his answer—

had he raised
his gaze to Sol—stumbling with every
step is but a trifling sum to pay.

Water's not as limpid
as we thought.
Cup it in your
hands before you drink. See
what's never seen. Faith is
so much certitude
you explode.

Flowers unfurl like
sails whenever a
zephyr clears its throat.

The hidden
know we're watching.
That's why those who *haven't* vision
are selected. Bartimaeus
in the shadow
of the Christ.

I only spy your sigh
when it is freezing. When a
surface is so thick
you cannot drown.

You alight a mourning
candle just to blow it out
again. There's a sacred
kind of sight that it
bestows—

when only *one*
of your pupils swells,
allowing a riddle
to pass.

This was to be a poem
about the children. Stretching
out their arms to touch
the Lord. Or deliver their
breath to the wind—
the mother of our flight.
Even when it's still
it's always there. Wings are merely
hands which fail to doubt;
a kite in stagnant sky
that skiffs its sea.
Evanescing clouds
which scale the
blind eye of the sun.

The Ascension

I'd be a poet if
it weren't for other poets.
Twelve of them
orbiting the *trunk*
of a walnut tree, bemoaning
there's no fruit;
craning up their neck
like some egret,
then scribbling in "regret"—
as if *none* have ever thought
of that before.

6 of them will note
they see it lean—
ready to deem it *Pisa.*
The other half-
dozen focusing on the
bark, incising in
initials—from some latent,
schoolyard love—
or cleverly inserting
something
about a dachshund, how its bite is
worse than its—

none of which will matter
as the work crews have arrived
to axe it down. It will be
another poem of loss.

All will lament the rings.
Compare them to some
circle/metaphor. How it doesn't
have a place of *start* & *stop,*
riffing every
Mahayana monk
they've ever heard.

They will cheap-
out with their dauby
Paper Mates
(cheep—get it?),
wait for the mama bird
to lift the same old tired
psalm she always does.

I'd rather sleep through dawn
than write of wings; cringing
when they post their magnum
opus.

I'll pass them
at the pub some afternoon,
watch them toast *themselves*—
each one yet another
Dylan Thomas,
Kerouac 2.0,

or Edna St. Vincent Millay—
yes, how can you go wrong
with a name like that? Thinking *all*
the greats
were senseless, loutish drunks—
it comes with the
territory—and that the world
will someday fawn

upon their *genius* misconstrued;
knowing the moribund
spawns immortals,
citing an unknown
Emily Dickinson, who even today
still seizes laurels
launched from the hands
of your featherless wood.

Intercessions

Fog is a poor
man's cloud. Stumbling
in the fall from
which we sprung.
I speak of the impoverished,
not the mist that shrouds
their steps.

The pond is the
poor man's ocean.
Watch him skipping
stones along its rim.
Triune in their bounce.

Rocks are a poor
man's mountain. Bits of a
broken soul.
Why the *bravo* for
the summit? The climbing *up*
applauded? No one takes
the time to view *descent,*
to measure
beneath the base.
None who plant a pennant
at its feet.

We seldom speak in
meters for the damned.
The child at the
bottom of the well.
His every gaze aloft as
if to God.
Drenched inside his
ears by water's lift.

We only bow our heads
to shut our eyes; teach
that prayer *ascends*
just like the fumes from
every lorry. Never *burrows*
as a mole
beneath our steps—
content in ever-blindness.

Pick it quickly, now.
The sense to *see*
or *hear.* Music
lost in one. Her face
when all is veiled.

Or select the taste of
touch. We submerge our
dead in dirt—say they're off
to some Valhalla
in the sun.

To shovel is to worship.
Feel it for yourself in
loamy soil. There's a reason
every swine will
lurch in mud. Toss to them
your pearls. Or place
them back in oysters
for safe-keeping. If the ocean's
scaled in fathoms, why should
all the Numen
live in skies, spurn
their own Messiahs,

take away our gills?
Choking like a fish
that drinks the air.

Sharing the Carapace

There are times that the snow
looks pristine enough to eat.
Or possibly imbibe. The meta-
morphosis of melt. Everything
will be clean that final day.

And then there are times
the buds will stay clasped
as a purse, unwilling to divvy the
touch of maquillage;
a huddled sort of
beauty, like scallops in their armor,

refusing the egression from a mouth—
till the buntings trill their
octaves to the stratus,
hoisted beyond what
auricles can hear—
the limit of our lobes—

before they plummet
in the form of freed ovation,
water that's been ransomed
from its freeze.

And then there are times
I can still pen something *pretty.*
For the wind has droned my name,
confided its furtive love
between our howls.

31 December 11:59 pm, or
The Devil in a Box

You told me you
were born a
minute too soon;
that although it's but a wink
of allotted time,
it wreaks its own havoc that
the rest of us can hardly
comprehend:

Applauding before the
rondo lands its close.
Divulging *the footman did it*
before anyone has a clue.
Even Poirot
had scratched his head.

You sprung up from your seat
like a *diable en boîte*—
60 nervous seconds
before the puck had hit
the twine. The crowd around
you figured you were mad,

though *you* were proven right
once the siren flashed its
whirling, carmine light.

You were unerring on
everything—
solving Wheel of Fortune
before the initial letter's ping.
Spoiling from the get-go
our *charades*—
while a person read their
card; cerebrated gestures.

Your mother & her doctor
tried to hold you back a bit—
envisioned your beaming visage
in the paper—first one born
in the cheer of Auld Lang Syne.

You warned us of tsunami
on the beach in Myanmar,
during a calm as still as
slumber;

made a traffic turn
just moments before a
sinkhole gobbled the ground—
sandwiched by two taxis which were
preordained to plunge.
The selling of your stocks
before the clang of the
closing bell.

We wondered on your luck,
your talismanic aura;
asked to see your clovers
or the toes of a hapless hare.

The gift of one's good fortune
comes at the cost of
innocence. The flip
of a fractured mirror,
the slit on a child's wrist.
The dance of an Irish
jig beneath the ladder;
a painter who will plummet
to his death.

Over by the carrots
you will wrest, a rabbit tries to
hop on one less leg; six more
like her somewhere
in your garden—
just lagging behind your
tugs by a single leap.

1969

I cringe when you declare
the landing on the moon
was just a fraud.
Sure, I've heard it all before
but you take it next-
level batshit, adding the moon *itself*
is a forge of steel & stone,
pockmarks of papier mâché,
a farce from the Pleaides,
its otherworldly makers
will return in '48.

I reply if there's no moon
then there's no tides;
no jerks from tug-of-war.

The tides are a hoax, you say—
recalling your solo trek
to the Bay of Fundy—locals
hamming it up
for fifty bucks.
And the starfish?
Props from Dollarama.

You have one of them on
your fridge
to hold your tix—
LBJ killed JFK—
over cherry blossoms
sticking to his shoes.
A postcard signed
by Sasquatch. And *we're*
all just a brain-in-a-vat—
convening beneath
The Dakota's
secret stairwell. Chaired by
Yoko Ono—whose rendition of
American Pie
is simply to die
for.

If you're really as daft
as this, quit your joe job
on the spot.
Tear the cheque from
Bilderberg.
Stroll down Madison Ave—
buck naked—your hair a
bawl of flame.

Saunter to the edge
of pancake-Earth. Nod to the
man from Graceland
that you're aware of who he is—
Guardian of the Gate,
UnMasker of the Moon,
the King of Every Truth
he's ever hid.

Stridulation, or The Cricket Factory Closed in London Town

"The biggest barrier is the *yuck* factor"
—CBC News, March 29, 2026

I wouldn't eat them
either. I'm not John
the fucking Baptist. No honey/
maple syrup
could ever make a difference.
Gravy can only do
so much. *How* you hide
says more than what is hidden.

But this has *nothing* to do
with brunch, or
the messenger of the Lord.
Or the mustard by
which you'll cloak your
ballpark frank. You're *out* at
first
before you've swung the bat.

The unsighted cannot see
what they are chewing.
Their tongues do
twice the work.

I imagine that the
aphids taste much better—
when you're told they're Frito-Lay.
When Doritos fail to drop
from the vending
machine, they become filet mignon.

Starvation makes you mad.
Look into the vacant
eyes of Belzec. Tell me they
wouldn't have swallowed
caterpillar stew. My flippancy's
gone too far.

There's a reason
for *best before.* Lest we've
butterflies in our
gut. This has nada
to do with nerves.

Who will croon of
evening when the
cicadas have been stilled?
What stands in for Luna—

as the smoke
ascends like cloth
to veil her scars?
As kids we thought it
cheese. Swiss is the
biggest rip-off
of them all. You pay
as much for holes
as for the milk. Craters an
empty bowl
on which to ponder.

We say that something's
pretty if it's never
marred by life. A collision
is just the fervency
of love; its impatience;
a kiss that's leapt too quick.

Even the fireflies
flee, their taillights
in the distance like
an ordered evacuation.

And once that *they've* absconded,
night will be bereft
of all the beauty
we failed to hear—

the aria of a star;

a shepherd's sentinel,
hooting *all is clear*—

the serenade of frogs
we thought off-key; or the
multi-legged creeping
down their throats,
a second chance to
sing with fallen wings.

Florida

They're still at the zoo, I see.
Simple-minded simians. Limited to
grunts & gestures.
Two of them beat their chests.

I imagine their patterns of
thought but come up empty. Surveying
them, it's clear they *cannot*
think. Nothing that they've done
has been indicative of such.

Though I wonder if they
dream. Of swinging from the trees
in Sarasota.

As for the gorillas,
they'll pass around an
orange with panache. Divvy
all the slices *equally.*
And one that slips his
arm between the bars, to snatch a
gale-blown hat from off the
ground. Crumples it in seconds.
Red has never been his hue of choice.

Why the Royal Tyrrell Museum Kicked Me Out

If it weren't for the iridium
in the strata,
the rulers of the roost
would still be *dinosaurs*—
the peak of the pecking order.
Waking us on the farm
instead of the drawl of
Foghorn Leghorn.

I've heard deGrasse & Dawkins
say the *chickens* are dinosaurs.
That Colonel Sanders knew it
from the start. But none would
buy a share in KFD.
Everything tastes like
poultry in the end.
It's just the batter
we all want.

We were never their
heir apparent; and
it's apparent we'll be
dethroned—

usurpers
who have gobbled
their remains.

What did you think you
fed your Maserati?
Texas tea? Oro negro?
The fumes are but their
laughter laughing last.
Even in their bones
they cackle best.
Those magnificent,
regal bones.

AI could never write
something this moronic

There's apparently 34,851,926,514,579
combinations of sky. *It's never the*
same sky twice, I've heard a zazillion times.
Except, of course, if it's a completely
cloudless day. But an allowance
will be made for doppelgängers;
for the storm cloud that always finds you
when you've left your grandma's brolly
on the bus.

You tell me of the faces
you make out in *cumulus:*
Mrs. Lichman, her
husband Rudolpho,
and Abner, Saul & Sarah—who
trail in the mist behind.
There was never a
trio of brats as grating
as they.

I will keep my
gaze to the fresh-cut grass.
Inhale its summer sweat.

But then you'll
say it reminds you
of your granddad's army cut.
And the patchy spots of yellow?
The disaster which had
befallen Gertrude's hair.
That's what always happens
when you fail to read the back
of a *Toni* box.
The fluff that is her grimace?
Speeds across the blue
like a Lockheed YF-12.
She had been your neighbour,
brought your family Sülze—

promptly *barfed* into a napkin
in the seconds her back was turned.

You're the *type* who spots a visage
everywhere. Of course,
everything is *Hitler* nowadays.
Save for the half-a-moustache
no one sports.

There are 93,772,818,265,449
variants of faces. At least
according to Schmelk—your faithful
physician—who continues to play the
lotto though he's never won anything *more*
than another ticket.
And maybe he should know—
bringing forth a baby
twice a day. There was a time
he had quadruplets, screamed up
and down the hall that
one of them looked like Mary—

no, not the girl around the
corner who had vanished
one spring day, her body never
unearthed in thirty years,
but the Mother of God—

whose countenance you swore
you saw in *Cream of Wheat,*
before you stirred molasses
in its gritty, sticky
mess & called it holy.

That Final Christmas Eve

The bulb is older than
I am. A reminisce
of mother. The time she
led me out in shedding
snow. *Santa Clause*
has dandruff. He needs
a place to wash his
head & beard. We laboured
for an hour, the Inuit
had nothing to
fear. It was in essence ice
& scarcely castle.
The shine of her
balmy glow, scouting
for a manger
once I slept.

The Son, or A Coveter Shows His Face

if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.
—Luke 19:40

My envy of the
houseplants is well
beyond the green. The fact they
sit on their duffs all day
and flourish—no worries of obesity,
that they've consumed
too many sweets. No one will be
putting them on the treadmill,
sneering they're out-of-
shape; wheezing
like Darth Vader.

But it's true
that they can drink too *much.*
At least if it were booze
they would get a little joy.
OK—a *lot* of joy. They toil not
but they can sure spin a tale—

when they're yellow in
their tips;

when they lean
toward the window, calling *dibs*
upon the light.
Boasting it's the *sun* in dire need—

that without their
photosynthesis, radiance
would be wasted on the rocks.
And there's nothing worse than
expending all your energy
on nothing at all.

Excuse me. The crags
would like a word. For who
else stores for others
the incandescence
of the Lord?

Who is surely meek
enough to let you shove
your ass upon its seat,
knowing it's a Throne
and saying nothing?

April Ruminations

Spring has conveyed
sweet somethings
in my ear—and if this is
how it ends then leave it be.

Buds are those which
speak of leaves' egress.
Green is embryonic. Autumnal
scarlet/citrine—the time of
accouchement.

This is why they tumble—

like infanti
lurching through a
birth canal, the knees
a pair of sentries
dropping guard.

If the Earth's indeed
their Mother,

why do we kick &
scatter them like they're
pebbles? In lieu of a
gentle cradle by
the hearth; a glimpse of
unrimed orange
in the flame—

a blaze to
warm their lifelines
through a winter's
funereal dirge.
How glorious
amid the birdsong
their demise.

Aporia

Paradox is pretentious—
it's simply *either*
way you're fucked.

There is no other
English word for *petrichor.*
This is why a poet
shouldn't dwell in
the Sahara. What's the point
of windows if nothing ever
changes? There are only *so* many ways
in which to scribble *sand.* The moment
we said it's *time*
became its typecast. Think mirror
and Bela Lugosi. Again we're back
to glass.

They say a cat
will never *meow*
to another of its kind.
That it's merely for the
benefit of *us.* Note the same
one-syllable word—tone is everything.

The mode in which it's spoken
means more than what's been said.
Think of the way your father
screamed your name. Or the manner
you come *down* on
B-flat minor.

If my brain
fails to tell me I have
cancer, how can it know
of love? Keeping death's
little secret
to itself. And you marvel
that I'm a cynic. Our species
is *already* extinct—where are all the
tourists from the future?
We'd have spotted them
by now, their souvenir
apparel, watching *Hitler*
fade from books—before our
very eyes.

If it were up to me, I'd have *deflected*
the asteroid.

To hell with your grand-
father conundrum.
What's birthed
is never unborn.

So what riddle
did we conjure
before the 22nd Catch?
Was *fourteen*
the one we dropped?
There in the
bottom of the 9th,
the umpire cueing *strike*
amid the windup.

What came first—
the opened or the closed?
Why *three*
in terms of knocks?
How did God
know He was God
if there was no one there
to tell Him?

Or maybe that
was Catch-19, where you finally
find the way to get
the experience ahead of
the job—stride the tightrope
aloft the canyon—prior to a
stream eroding rock;
your echo before you've
even evinced a sound.

While You Slept

You're lamenting
like a kvetching
Jeremiah:

I no longer write you
love poems; say your lilt
has put to shame
the morning swifts;
I haven't compared your
glory to a nestling's—
in that moment it
takes to the sky
for the very first time.

Very first is quite
misleading. Its wings
may have burst through
fissures while you slept.
Then took a trial flight
beneath the fleet of stars.
My telescope
transfixed upon the
same old barren
basins of the moon—

until an egg which up &
fluttered before it hatched,
declared its innate fondness
for the air—forever yoked
as to a plow—

that much like Galileo, I'd be forced
to keep this discovery to
myself—housebound to the
margins—

sing you *happy birthday*
despite my strep;
scrub lasagna from the
pan while you are napping;
creep into the bedroom
with an afghan, lay it on
your body while you slumber,
then place my newest scribble
in your hand for when
you wake—

a *caterpillar*
gone aloft—albeit
in the clutch of beak;

drifting nigher to the
sun than any moth
would ever venture
in either dream or
dread of dusk.

Andreas Gripp was born and raised in Treaty 6 Territory (London, Ontario) and in 2024 moved to Leamington with his wife, Carrie. He's the author of over 40 books of poetry, including *Someday She'll Adore You, Give Us This Day, The Magnificat,* and *Unhallowed Antiphons.* His poems have been lauded for their lyrical and literary merit, accessibility, and for their blend of comic and poignant storytelling.

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